(e) whether the Competent Authority has taken any action on the report submitted by the Bhopal Commission on the environmental/industrial aspect of the Bhopal Gas leak from the Union Carbide Plant in Bhopal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) As per information made available by Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, the Madhya Pradesh Government has taken suitable measures to secure the dangerously/chemically affected surroundings and campus soil of the Union Carbide Plant in Bhopal. Hazardous material like tarry residue (46.50MT), contaminated soil (127 MT) and semi-processed pesticides (18.40 MT) have been collected and separately stored in four halls/sheds in the factory premises.

The Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers has entrusted the work of planning the methodology of removal of toxic wastes and preparing the cost estimates of Engineers India Limited.

(c) and (d) Security guards have been appointed by the State Government to provide round the clock security to protect the general public from health hazards of the plant premises.

(e) Bhopal Commission, an NGO is reported to have submitted a report to the State Government in April, 2002. As the Government is already providing adequate help to the gas victims through relief and rehabilitation measures, it is felt that no useful purpose would be served by organizing a conference/workshop as suggested by the Commission.

India's rank in world countries

1891. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA:
SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that a new environment sustainability index produced by a team of environment experts at Yale and Columbia Universities and released at the World Economic Forum in Davos has ranked India as one of the worst polluters rating her at 101 of 146 countries in respect of air pollution, biodiversity, quality and adequacy of potable water supply and green house gas emissions;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken in addressing these deficiencies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA) (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The process of industrialization, urbanization, social change and the increasing pressure of population have posed new challenges for us. The Government of India accords high priority to environment protection and sustainable development. These concerns are duly reflected in our planning process. The Government of India has already taken a series of steps, including establishment of a regulatory framework to address these concerns.

Erosion of forest land, land sliding, etc., in Himalayan region

†1892. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the action Government are taking to prevent the problem of erosion of forest land, reduction in forest cover and land sliding, etc. in Himalayan region;

(b) the proposal for conservation of forest wealth in Himalayan region; and

(c) the action Government are taking to create awareness among the people of Himalayan region in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) The Ministry of Environment and Forests is implementing three major schemes; namely National Natural Resource Management Scheme (NNRMS), support to G.B. Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Develoment (GBPIHED), and Integrated Eco-development Research Programme (IERP). Under these schemes, the activities relating to assessment and mapping of Himalayan forest resources and evolving integrated management strategies for their conservation are undertaken. In addition, the National Afforestation Programme (NAP) Scheme of the Ministry provides financial support to Forest Development Agencies (FDAs) in the country for participatory

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.